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A STUDY ON PROBLEMS OF ELEMENTARY TEACHER EDUCATION OF KEONJHAR DISTRICT OF ODISHA

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ABSTRACT

Teacher education is the key instrument in the process of preparing professional teachers who can in their practice ensure transformative learning among learners, where teacher and learner, learner and learner are co-constructors of knowledge. Therefore, great efforts were made and still are being made to improve the quality of teacher education. The present study intended to explore the current status of Elementary Teacher Education of keonjhar district of odisha with respect to specified national norms and standards and to highlight various problems pertaining to Elementary Teacher Education programme and institutions of the district. The study also concluded with some suggestive measures to be taken in order to overcome the existing problems of elementary teacher education to some extent.



KEYWORDS : *Teacher Education, Elementary Teacher Education, Problems of Elementary Teacher Education.*

INTRODUCTION:

"The destiny of India is being shaped in its classrooms."

- Kothari Commission Report, 1964-66

Education has a very potent and pivotal role in the development of nation. But the quality of education is greatly determined by the quality of its teachers. Therefore, Teachers are regarded as the nation builders. To be able to discharge such a high responsibility, it is very necessary that the teacher must become conscious of his role towards society. His behaviour should indicate his attempt to do his job properly and his personality must reflect characteristics of good citizenship, dignity of the individual, rights and duties etc., so that he may transmit the same to the younger generation. For this very purpose of upbringing teachers there is a dire need of teacher-education. Teacher education plays a central role in professional development of teachers and forms the backbone of school education. The goal of teacher education has been intermingled with the goals of education from time immemorial. In general, the concept of teacher education programmes is identified with the training of teachers for classroom teaching in a face-to-face situation. But one of the greatest challenges facing teacher education in today's era is preparing good quality teachers for an ever-changing world.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

After the independence, teacher education was given due weightage by the organizations responsible for the development of the country. The government of India considered its importance and regarded it as the key to self reliance. The deterioration in the quality of the teacher education has become one of the concerns for the policy makers and thus they are of the opinion that certain measure should be taken in this regard. The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 brought about a breakthrough in the field of Teacher Education in India in general and in Orissa in particular. It has rightly remarked (p.26), "Teacher Education is a condensed process and its pre-service and in-service components are inseparable. National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), a statutory governing organization was formed which regulates various teacher education institution across the country through the state councils (State council of educational research and training, SCERT) of the states. For smooth functioning of these institutions, NCTE has been framing and reframing its norms and standards from time to time for qualitative upraise of teacher education institutions which are to abide by all the teacher education institutions of the country. NCTE has also developed a National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) in 2009 which ensures a common teacher education curriculum across the country with qualitative interventions. There are two categories of professional teacher education programmes have been providing for preparing two types of teachers, one is secondary and other is elementary teachers. The secondary teacher education course is known as Bachelor of Education, (B.Ed.) and that of elementary teacher education is Diploma in elementary education (D.El.Ed.). In NCFTE (2009), the curriculum for both the teacher education courses and their transaction has been specified. The D.El.Ed. programme which meant for preparing quality teachers for elementary stage of education i.e classes I to VIII, is a two year professional programme of elementary teacher education. In Odisha there are 30 DIETs (District Institutes of Education and Training), 4 BITEs (Block Institute of Teacher Education) and 33 ETEIs (Elementary Teacher Education Institutions) are running now under the governance of TE & SCERT, (Govt. of Odisha) to prepare quality elementary teachers.

The aim of elementary education is to fulfill the basic learning needs of all children in an inclusive school environment bridging social and gender gaps with active participation of the community (NCTE, 2014). But from the report of the National Achievement Survey (NAS) which was conducted throughout the country on November 13, 2017 for elementary Classes III, V and VIII in government and government aided schools, it has been found that the learning outcomes from the elementary children of Odisha is not satisfactorily up to the mark (NAS, MHRD, 2017). In the failure of children, there is somewhere teachers' failure is been noticed which consequently points finger towards our elementary teacher education system.

Dash (1985) studied the teacher education programme in Orissa and found that inadequate physical facilities, inefficient teachers, poor quality of trainees, unsuitable practice teaching and undue expansion of training colleges was reflected in the poor status of teacher training programmes in the state. **Koul** (1988) while discussing National Policy of Education and Teacher Education had pointed certain relevant issues for the immediate consideration to improve quality of teacher education. These issues included fair and objective selections of teacher trainees and updating the curricula of teacher education. The **Programme of Action** (POA, 1992) document stated that "the quality of pre-service teacher education, instead of improving with recent developments in pedagogical science, had shown signs of deterioration as professional commitment and overall competencies of teachers left much to be desired". The teacher education programme had to maintain the quantity and quality simultaneously in order to provide its relevancy and social acceptance. **Mohanty** (1997) studied the functions of NCTE and how far it had been successful in carrying out those functions. He found that a large number of teacher education institutions had been functioning only for 2 to 3 months in an academic year. NCTE had stipulated 180 working days for secondary teacher education programme but many secondary teacher education institutions had not taken this stipulate seriously. He recommended that norms and standards of NCTE should be strictly followed by all the teacher education institutions.

Govinda and Sood (2000) conducted a national evaluation of DIETs to find out the available technical and infrastructural capacity of DIETs in all states in the country for carrying out the assigned functions. Out of seven branches envisioned in the DIET designed to carry out the expected functions, Planning and Management (P&M), Educational Technology and Work Experience branches were non-functional in most of the DIETs in the country. **Sharma** (2002) found that “untrained teachers, lack of professional status, drop outs, limited student strength, outmoded curriculum and lack of funds are responsible for deterioration of quality of teacher education”. **Mohanty** (2002) concluded that all the persons who got training for teaching did not enter the teaching profession because the jobs were not easily available. Therefore uncertainty in getting a job also affected the quality of pre-service training. Moreover, poor quality of curriculum of pre-service training also played a vital role in preparing bad teachers. **NCTE** (2003) conducted “A study of community participation” used an Information Schedule and Questionnaire for DIETs to collect data. It was found that DIET Programmes were not suitably oriented to contextual or local needs of tribal, hilly and rural areas. **Singh** (2003) in his paper “Towards a new look at Teacher Education in India” had reported that the phenomena of attracting only average or below average men and women by teacher education, because of poor salary scales of teachers, to some extent is almost universal. He further concluded that: **i.** Teacher education has always depended on market forces which govern its supply and demand. **ii.** Teacher education students come from more ordinary social class backgrounds than university students. **iii.** There is a view that gender and class have seriously affected teacher education programmes. **iv.** Reform in teacher education is dependent on the reforms in the occupation of teaching. **Kaur** (2004) teacher education institutions were increasing but the quality of teacher education was deteriorating. Teacher Education need to be visualized as per future needs by giving proper training to teachers. **Narang** (2004) said that quality of School Education largely dependent on the quality of teachers, the quality of teachers, which were products of teacher education institutions and on the quality of teacher education. **Joshi** (2005) commented that privatization had already started showing its tremendous impact on “Teacher Education”. Mind boggling increase in the number of private B.Ed. colleges had created a grave situation with regard to the quality of teacher training programmes.

From the above reviews, it is felt that many studies were conducted on teacher education system and its related issues in odisha but a few studies were conducted to explore the status and problems of elementary teacher education. An attempt was made by the researcher in this context to explore the problems of elementary teacher education of Konjhar district of Odisha in particular. The problem of the study is thus stated as; “**A Study on Problems of Elementary Teacher Education of Konjhar district of Odisha**”.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS :

- **Teacher education:** Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the required knowledge, attitude, behaviour and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in class rooms, school and outside the four walls of the school.
- **Elementary Teacher Education:** Elementary Teacher Education refers to the teacher education programme aims at preparing prospective teachers for elementary grades of education which is named as Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed.) across all the states.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

1. To analyse the current status of elementary teacher education of Keonjhar district.
2. To study various problems of elementary teacher education of Keonjhar district.

Research Questions :

1. What is the current status of elementary teacher education of Keonjhar district?
2. What are the persisting problems of elementary teacher education of Keonjhar district?

Method of the Study :

Descriptive survey method was adopted in the study as the researcher tried to explore all possible measures to gather information regarding the current status as well as the problems pertaining to elementary teacher education.

Population and Sample :

The Teacher Educators, principals and the student teachers of all the three Elementary Teacher Education institutions of Keonjhar district of Odisha comprised the population of the study. However, the institutions are District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Keonjhar located at Sadar block, Govt. Elementary Teacher Education Institute (GETEI) located at Remuli of Champua block and Govt. Elementary Teacher Education Institute (GETEI) at Fakirpur of Anandpur block.

Keeping in view the nature of the population, a total of 12 teacher educators, (4 from DIET and 4 from each GETEI), Principals of the 3 institution and 60 student teachers with 20 from each institution were selected randomly as sample from which data was to be collected.

Sampling Strategy:

Convenient sampling procedure was applied because of non availability of adequate number of Teacher Educators in GETEIs.

Tools and Procedure of Data Collection :

A proforma or datasheet was prepared in order to collect information regarding the present status of the three Elementary teacher education institutions of the district and data was collected through personal interviews with the staff members and the students of respective institutions separately. Separate questionnaires had been prepared for the Principals, Teacher Educators and Student teachers of the respective institutions to collect information regarding various problems they were facing relating to this elementary teacher education programme. The questionnaire for Principals, Teacher Educators and Student teachers contained 20, 20 and 15 questions respectively in which all are of both open-ended and close-ended type questions (mixed questionnaires). Data was collected from 3 principals, one from each institution, 12 teacher educators, four from each institution and 60 student teachers, 20 from each institution covering both boys and girls.

Analysis and Interpretation of data :

▪ Analysis and Interpretation of data regarding present status of the Elementary Teacher Education Institutions:

The data collected through the predesigned datasheet regarding the present status of three elementary teacher education institutions were compared with the prescribed norms and standards of NCTE for elementary teacher education or D.El.Ed. programme and then analysed and interpreted itemwise qualitatively.

The data collected through personal interviews regarding the present status of DIET and two GETEIs of Keonjhar district sketches that all the three institutions lack adequate staffs including teaching, non-teaching, administrative and even principals with respect to the NCTE norms prescribed in 2014. All of the institutions did not have adequate infrastructural facilities and co-curricular materials as per NCTE regulation. Though some of it were available but was not properly used either or outdated in practice. Sufficient instructional material is unavailable. Though ICT lab was created under the Govt. assistance but that was beyond the access of students as there was no lab instructor. There was no motivation for organizing other professional development programmes as per the NCTE norms other than school visits and seminar. No managing committee was operated in any of the institution to regulate various activities.

▪ **Analysis and Interpretation of data regarding problems of Elementary Teacher Education:**

The data were collected regarding the problems of Elementary Teacher Education in terms of responses of Principals, Teacher Educators and Pupil teachers to the separate questionnaires were then analysed item-wise and interpreted both quantitatively as well as qualitatively taking their responses along with their opinions into consideration.

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES FROM PRINCIPALS-

Data collected from three principals (1 permanent, 1 working & 1 in-charge principal) of DIET and two GETETs of Keonjhar reveals that all the three principals satisfied with the admission procedure of the institution and were in favour of entrance examination for admission into the D.El.Ed. course and stated as it is a welcoming step of Govt. for the selection of competent candidates. 33% of the principals satisfied with the fee structure of the institution for admission while 67% of them opined that the fee structure is high and hard to bear by financially poor students. 67% of the principals stated that they are facing problem in management of overall academic and non-academic work with inadequate staff and limited physical facilities where other 33% of the principals refused of that. All the principals mentioned that the number of teaching staff is not adequate for smooth running of the classes. 33% of the principals stated that the number of non-teaching staff is adequate for smooth running of the institution while 67% of them denied it demanding more staffs. All the principals accepted that they are satisfied with their salary. 100% of the principals disagreed that the syllabus prescribed for D.El.Ed course is creating over burden in the minds of the students. 67% of the principals opined that there should some changes in the syllabus like more emphasis should be given on practice teaching classes while 33% of them opined that the syllabus is self sufficient. All the principals opined that the number of days for practice teaching should be increased for making skillful teachers. 67% of the principals stated that the library facilities available in their institution are adequate while 33% of them stated it requires upgradation. All the principals agreed that all the staff members of their institution are efficient and the teaching staffs are efficient and cooperative to learners. 33% of the principals opined that the co-curricular activities done in their institution are sufficient while 67% of them opted for more if the fund permits to do so. All the principals satisfied with the participation of their students in co-curricular activities and 100% of the principals disagreed that the infrastructural facilities available in their institutions are adequate. All the principals stated that the Govt. Funds allotted to their institution are inadequate. All the principals satisfied with the examination system of their institution and the academic achievement of their students. 33% of the principals satisfied with the performance of their students in practice teaching classes while 67% showed dissatisfaction stating more practice of methods and skills are necessary.

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES FROM TEACHER EDUCATORS -

From the data given by the 12 Teacher Educators of DIET and two GETETs of Keonjhar reveals that 50% of teachers satisfied with the admission procedure of the institution but 50% of teachers said it takes the whole academic year that less time remain doing other works. 100% of teachers were in favour of entrance examination for admission into the D.El.Ed. course and stated as it is a fair means of selection of candidates while some of them suggested that it would be more transparent if both the entrance mark and carrier mark is taken for preparing merit list for admission. 75% of teacher educators satisfied with the fee structure of the institution for admission but 25% of them opined for free admission to financially pors and provision of financial assistance for the practicum. 50% of teacher educators stated that they were facing problem in classroom management such as lack of instructional material and ICT use and improper electrification of classrooms where other 50% of teachers refused of that. 17% of teachers accepted that they are satisfied with their salary whereas 83% of them were not satisfied for getting salary same as that of Govt. secondary school teachers of the state and for getting much less than regular teachers in case of contractual teacher educators. 75% of teacher educators opined that they are facing problem conducting non-academic activities like doing clerical work without its knowledge; admission work takes much time that less time left for completing the

course etc while 25% of teachers said oppositely. 25% of teachers agreed that the syllabus prescribed for D.El.Ed course is creating over burden in the minds of the students while 75% of teachers opined that it is not doing so. All of the teachers opined that there should some changes in the syllabus like the theory papers should be reduced in volume and number of practice teaching classes should be increased. 50% of teachers agreed that they are facing problem while supervising practice teaching lessons of students such as school is far from the institution and no remuneration is being provided neither to students or teachers for that while other 50% of them disagreed of facing any problem. 50% of teacher educators suggested that the duration of practice teaching should be increased so that they can practise the methods and acquire the skills well enough whereas other 50% of teachers said the duration is sufficient for the student teachers. 17% of teachers remarked that students are facing problem for preparing lesson plan and teaching learning material during practice teaching such as selection of material, number and size of the material, cost of those etc while 83% of teachers remarked differently. 75% of teacher educators satisfied with the library facilities available in their institution while 25% of teachers complained of lack of librarian, lack of upgradation of books and journals etc. 50% of the teachers mentioned that all the staff members and principal of their institution are co-operative while 50% of teachers said some of them are not cooperative. All of the teachers were satisfied with the behaviour of non-teaching staff of their institution. 17% of teacher educators satisfied with the co-curricular activities done in their institutions while rest 83% of teachers felt more co-curricular activities should be which could not be done due to lack of cocurricular materials, lack of teachers and sufficient time on the part of teachers in the institution. All of the teachers satisfied with the examination system of their institution and the academic achievement of their students. 50% of teachers satisfied with the performance of their students in practice teaching classes but 50% of them stated more activity centered and learner oriented classes to be created. All of the teachers satisfied with the overall attendance of students in theory and practice teaching classes but. 33% of teacher educators agreed that the infrastructural facilities of their institution are adequate for all while 87% of teachers showed dissatisfaction and complained lack of infrastructure facilities.

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES FROM STUDENT TEACHERS-

From the data given by the 60 student teachers of DIET and two GETELs of Keonjhar reveals that 100% of them are satisfied with admission procedure of their institutions and in favour of entrance examination conducted for taking admission into D.El.Ed course. 50% of them satisfied with the fee structure of the institution for admission while other 50% reasoned that the admission fee is high for financially poor students and suggested it should be free for them. Again 50% of students found facing problem in classroom teaching of their teachers because of teacher-centric method of teaching whereas other 50% are satisfied that their teachers identify their learning problems and try to resolve them. In this way 90% of students responded that they are satisfied with teaching of their teachers while 10% complained that some teachers are not teaching properly and doing time pass. While 5% of students thought that the D.El.Ed. syllabus prescribed for them is creating over burden for learning, 95% of them had no objection regarding the prescribed syllabus. 57% of students opined that they are facing problem during practice teaching like students are not responding as of their expectation, the school is very far from their institution, managing overcrowded class and class time management etc. where remaining 43% opined of not facing any problem. 30% of students were in favour of increasing the number of days for practice teaching for getting more teaching experience while 70% of them were against it. Again, 50% of students stated that they are facing problem for preparing lesson plan and teaching learning material during practice teaching such as planning activities for different ability level of students and preparing TLMs which takes much time and leaves less time for other preparation while other 50% had stated oppositely. 30% of the student expressed they are satisfied with the library facilities of their institution where 70% of students were unsatisfied with the small size of library room and limited no. of books and suggested for separate reading room. 85% of the students agreed that all teaching staffs of their institution are co-operative for their study and remaining 15% of the students disagreed that. 40% of students were satisfied with the behaviour of non-teaching staff of their

institution while 60% of them are unsatisfied that the non-teaching staffs don't behave with them properly and sometimes engage them with their personal or non-academic work. 65% of students satisfied with the co-curricular activities organised in their institution while 35% disagreed it and opined that more and varied number of co-curricular activities should be done and with proper planning. 87% of the students satisfied with the examination system of their institution and 13% of them were unsatisfied and a few demanded for objective type question papers in the examination. 100% of the students were satisfied with the academic achievement of the students of their institution.

MAJOR FINDINGS :

After subsequent analysis and interpretation of the compiled data the researcher was arrived at the following major findings described under the following two heads as below;

1. Findings regarding present status of the Elementary Teacher Education Institutions:

- The elementary teacher educations are lacking minor infrastructural facilities while major infrastructural facilities like classroom, ICT lab, library, boundary wall, Resource room etc. needs modification and repairing.
- The institutions do not have sufficient teaching staffs and some of those present are either contractual or deputed from nearby schools. The number of regular teaching staffs as per NCTE mandate is unavailable.
- Administrative and supportive staffs such as office superintendent, computer lab assistant, and Librarian are totally absent in all the three institutions.
- The two GETEIs don't have regular principals, the seniormost teachers are managing those institution.
- The ICT lab is though constructed and computers are available under Govt's finance but are not functioning fully in GETEIs. However, it is functioning in DIET but is far from the access of learners.
- No other remarkable professional development programmes organized as per NCTE suggested list of programmes except one or two seminars and school visits.

2. Findings regarding problems of Elementary Teacher Education:

- The selection process of students through entrance examination for taking admission in to D.El.Ed course is appreciable but it takes much time of an academic year as the successive selection and admission process continues over 7 to 8 months from the date of entrance examination at different phases.
- The fee structure levied for admission is to some extent unbearable by financially weaker students. Whereas there is no provision for remuneration to meet the financial requirement during practice teaching.
- Though the syllabus for D.El.Ed course is self sufficient, there is much weightage given to theory part whereas one fourth of total marks is assigned to practice teaching and school internship, which is the major part of any teacher training curriculum.
- Lack of sufficient and modern instructional materials and its use in classroom teaching hinders effective classroom transaction.
- Poor library facility and lack of hands on reference materials at trace back capacity and efficiency of Teacher educators as well as student teachers.
- Unsatisfactorily low salary of Teacher educators gives downward thrust to their job motivation as they have been paid equally as secondary school teachers even though they possess master degree in two subjects.
- Students are facing problems during practice teaching and in preparing teaching learning material due to lack of prior knowledge about teaching skills and methodologies.

- Much of teachers' time is spent in engagement in non-academic works like clerical work, admission work, computer typing etc. Less time they can contribute towards academic work and professional development programmes.
- Insufficient Govt. funds hinders the institutional development
- Co-curricular activities have been given less priority.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION :

The present status of Elementary Teacher Education institutions of Keonjhar district is that the Govt. Elementary Teacher Education Institutes (GETEIs) are suffering from the problems of staff deficiency and consequently, lack of adequate teaching and nonteaching staff results poor management of the institution and poor teaching performance of the students. However, DIET Keonjhar somehow manages this problem. Lack of infrastructural facilities like hostels for girls, reading rooms, computer access to students also contributes towards poor performance of student teachers. Inadequate library facility, lack of modern technologies of teaching learning and non availability of hands on instructional material at this age of digitalization inert the capabilities of Teacher educators as well as student teachers and hence, paralyzing the elementary teacher education institutions. Thus, adequate infrastructure should be provided to these and that should be made functional. Sufficient staff appointment can reduce the burden of teaching staffs so that they can dedicate much time for the academic works. The admission work should be done within a month or two so that no haphazard process carried out throughout the year and an academic calendar can be prepared at the beginning of the session. Salary of the teacher educators should be enhanced so that they get job satisfaction and hence better job motivation. The fee structure for financially weaker students may somehow be made liberal or borne by the Govt. The D.El.Ed syllabus may be adjusted if possible so as to put much emphasis on practice teaching and school internship than theory subjects. More demonstration classes should be organized to orient the pupil teachers regarding various modern skills and methods of teaching. Co-curricular activities should be given due emphasis by the heads of the teacher educations as these are necessary for achieving the objective of all round development of education. Lastly, Govt. should assist in necessary financial requirements of the teacher education institution for its overall development otherwise; all the planning will remain in vein.

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